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Information and Communications Technology Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

Arrangements for the Galaxy System

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on the Information and Communications Technology Strategy (A/59/265) contains proposals for the review of possible arrangements for the migration of financial and technical support to the Galaxy system from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat to the Department of Management of the United Nations Secretariat. The Secretary-General seeks concurrence of the General Assembly with the suggested course of action and the submission of the related proposals to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

* The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General is issued following internal consultations within the Secretariat.

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1. In his report to the General Assembly on the Information and Communications Technology Strategy (A/57/620), the Secretary-General elaborated on the importance of enhancing e-Management in the Secretariat. This area of focus encompasses the management and administrative systems where the returns generated by information and communications technologies (ICT) are associated with improving the decision-making process and adding efficiency through streamlining of administrative workflows and reducing duplication. The report also noted that the feasibility of an Organization-wide approach to automating administrative processes would be assessed.

2. In the same report, the Secretary-General noted that in addition to the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), several human resources information systems, inter alia, Galaxy, were expected to play a central role in supporting the human resources management reform and in providing effective and efficient mechanisms for recruitment, performance management and client service (para. 39). Galaxy Releases 1 and 2 were named among the most notable projects and initiatives in the area of e-Management since 2002. The priority attached to the further development of Galaxy was reiterated in the progress report on the Information and Communications Technology Strategy contained in document A/59/265.

3. One of the goals of the staff selection system introduced in May 2002 was to develop a speedier, more transparent system for filling vacancies. The staffing module of Galaxy is the tool in support of the staffing system which integrates recruitment, placement, managed mobility and promotion of United Nations staff. The Galaxy e-Staffing tool consists of three main sections: vacancy announcement, selection process and a reporting facility. The tool was developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in close cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management. The tool has been implemented in over 40 duty stations including all seven main overseas established offices, peacekeeping missions, the Tribunals and all departments at Headquarters. The Office of Human Resources Management initiated the advertising of vacancies in Galaxy in 2002. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations commenced advertising field vacancies in Galaxy in 2004. At present, the announcements of positions for field experts under the 200 series of the Staff Rules of the United Nations in the Secretariat are also available in Galaxy. Since the year 2002, 5,529 posts in total have been advertised in Galaxy for which 1,119,000 applications have been submitted by applicants from 189 countries. The system was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/305 of 15 April 2003 as the standard electronic tool for staff selection in the Secretariat within the context of the Secretary-General's reform of human resources management.

4. In the same resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the introduction of Galaxy and requested the Secretary-General to further improve it, including measures to deal with the increased number of applications, and to invite all the organizations of the United Nations system to use Galaxy for recruitment, and to report on its performance to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005,[1] noting that the Office of

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/58/7 and Corr.1).

Human Resources Management would continue to emphasize the streamlining and automation of activities in the areas of recruitment, placement, promotion and staff administration in order to reduce vacancies and increase transparency, expressed the opinion that those efforts appeared to be very limited, and that there was considerable room for automation of more processes and activities (para. VIII.28). The Advisory Committee also stated that experience so far in using the Galaxy system showed that there had been an inadequate analysis of tasks, scope and coverage of the system before the project was implemented (para. VIII.30). The Advisory Committee further emphasized that, unless Galaxy was modified to cover other areas and its problems were resolved, its effectiveness would be compromised and the cost-effectiveness of its future use would be called into question. These views of the Advisory Committee were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003.

5. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Human Resources Management cooperated in the development of Galaxy e-Staffing, to meet the emerging needs of both offices, primarily using the resources of peacekeeping missions. Currently, utilizing the same resources, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continues to provide financial and technological support for the development and maintenance of this electronic tool, despite the fact that this Secretariat-wide activity is not a core responsibility of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

6. During April-September 2004, the Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted an audit review of the Galaxy system. The Office of Internal Oversight Services recognized that Galaxy was now established as one of the Organization's core application systems. The Office of Internal Oversight Services has recommended the migration of the technical development, maintenance and support functions from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Management, specifically to the Information Technology Services Division of the Office of Central Support Services. However, the auditors considered that this transfer should not be effected until the Division was in a position to assure a continued level of service, given that significant financial resources might be required for this purpose.

7. Galaxy e-Staffing has now become an established corporate tool. It therefore requires regularization of its budgetary and technical support, and the migration of responsibilities from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Management, where such projects belong. For the purpose of such migration, a review will be undertaken to establish the most appropriate technological infrastructure for the Galaxy system, including the possible use of "off-the-shelf" packages to support some of its functions. Following that review, it is foreseen that a report would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on a strategic plan for the technical support of the Galaxy system by the Department of Management and on possible financial implications of the new arrangements for the programme budget.

8. In the meantime, to ensure that all these tasks are implemented in good order, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would continue the existing partnership in support and development of Galaxy.

Recommendation

9. **The General Assembly is requested to endorse the proposed coursrse of action.**